

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O R 190802Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4571

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

S E C R E T SEOUL 9786

EXDIS

DELIVER OPENING OF BUSINESS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MNUC, PARK, KS, FR, CA

SUBJECT: ROK NUCLEAR PROCESSING PLANT: CANADIAN APPROACH

REF: A. SEOUL 9526, B. SEOUL 9661

1. CANADIAN AMBASSADOR STILES PROVIDED ME WITH READOUT ON HIS CONVERSATION DECEMBER 19 WITH FOREIGN MINISTER RE NUCLEAR REPROCESSING ISSUE. STILES MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER THIS MORNING SHORTLY AFTER CABINET MEETING AT WHICH FONMIN HAD RESIGNED AND WAS LATER REPLACED; FONMIN CLEARLY PREOCCUPIED, BUT FULLY BRIEFED.

2. STILES IN MAKING APPROACH STATED THAT SIGNATURE OF AGREEMENT ON CANADIAN REACTOR WOULD HAVE TO BE DELAYED AT LEAST UNTIL JANUARY 19 WHEN PARLIAMENT RECONVENES BUT NO DATE COULD BE SET AT PRESENT FOR SIGNATURE. HE REVIEWED STRONG OPPOSITION IN CANADIAN PARLIAMENT TO AGREEMENT AND SAID THAT CANADIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD BE RELYING ON WRITTEN ROKG ASSURANCES RE NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION. HE ASKED FONMIN WHETHER THESE ASSURANCES STILL APPLY.

3. ACCORDING STILES, FONMIN REPLIED YES, ROKG HAS NO, RPT NO,
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INTENTIONS TO PRODUCE NUCLEAR WEAPONS OR DEVICES. FONMIN THEN

WENT ON TO STATE THAT USG IS WORRIED ABOUT KOREAN ACQUISITION OF REPROCESSING PLANT FROM FRENCH, BUT ROKG DOES NOT SEE BASIS FOR THIS WORRY. HOWEVER, IF USG ASSURES ROKG THAT IT WILL SUPPLY KOREAN REQUIREMENTS FOR REPROCESSING OF NUCLEAR WASTE MATERIAL, THERE WILL BE NO NEED FOR ROKG TO ACQUIRE PLANT.

4. IN ACCORDANCE WITH INSTRUCTIONS, STILES THEN ASKED WHY ROKG NEEDS REPROCESSING PLANT SINCE IT CANNOT USE EITHER US OR CANADIAN DERIVED SPENT FUEL. HE ASKED FURTHER WHERE, UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, ROKG WOULD ACQUIRE SPENT FUEL. FONMIN REPLIED THAT THEY WOULD ACQUIRE IT ON THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET. STILES COMMENTED THAT ON BASIS CONVERSATION, HE IS CONVINCED ROKG IS UNDER NO RPT NO ILLUSIONS AS TO WHY CANADIANS DELAYED SIGNATURE OF AGREEMENT AND THAT KOREANS UNDERSTAND LINKAGE BETWEEN DELAY OF SIGNATURE AND REPROCESSING ISSUE.

5. LAST EVENING, IN BRIEF ASIDE TO ME, FONMIN COMMENTED THAT, "I THINK I HAVE TAKEN CARE OF YOUR BIG PROBLEM." I COULD ONLY ASCERTAIN THAT HE WAS REFERRING TO REPROCESSING ISSUE, BUT DID NOT HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO FOLLOW UP. IN LIGHT CONVERSATION TODAY WITH CANADIAN AMBASSADOR, FONMIN'S COMMENT TO ME MAY HAVE GREATER SIGNIFICANCE.

6. COMMENT: IN ADDRESSING QUESTIONS IN SEOUL'S 9662 AND 9663 I STRONGLY URGE THAT WE GIVE PARTICULAR EMPHASIS TO QUESTION RE PROVISION OF NUCLEAR REPROCESSING SERVICES AND PROVIDE POSITIVE ASSURANCES TO ARRANGE FOR REPROCESSING IN US PLANTS, IF MULTINATIONAL FACILITIES NOT YET AVAILABLE, AT SUCH TIME AS ROKG HAS SUFFICIENT WASTE MATERIAL AVAILABLE FOR REPROCESSING.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS, NUCLEAR COOPERATION PROGRAMS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SEOUL09786
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750441-0666
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751223/aaaaauco.tel
Line Count: 92
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 SEOUL 9526, 75 SEOUL 9661
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 APR 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <06 OCT 2003 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ROK NUCLEAR PROCESSING PLANT: CANADIAN APPROACH
TAGS: MNUC, KS, FR, CA, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006